Lottery money to address urgent repairs to Wales' historic churches

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Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced £379,600 of Lottery funding to help secure the future of two of Wales' most historic places of worship.

This vital money is helping congregations address a back log of urgent repairs to listed churches and chapels at risk across Wales including St David's Church in Neath and St Barrwg's Church in Bedwas, Caerphilly.

St David's Church in Neath and St Barrwg's church in Bedwas are amongst the first of 35 churches across the UK to be awarded a grant through HLF's new Grants for Places of Worship programme.

Launched in March, it supersedes the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme. In addition to providing money for urgent repairs, the programme is now also funding new works that support and encourage greater community use and engagement, helping to increase the number of people who take an active interest in these historic buildings and who will care for them in the future. As well as much needed conservation work, today's grants will support the provision of new toilets and kitchens; create historical exhibitions, leaflets and guide books; commission skills training for volunteer tour guides; and develop digital marketing tools including websites and web-based tools such as apps.

Singer Katherine Jenkins, who learnt to sing at St David's Church in Neath, said: "I am delighted that St David's church has received this development funding to take out much needed repairs. I have been very proud to support this beautiful church over the years and have been closely involved in helping the congregation to secure its future. I fondly recall the many opportunities I had to sing at St David's when growing up in Neath, which played a big part in my development as a performer."

Jennifer Stewart, Head of HLF Wales, said: "There is a place of worship in almost every ward, village and town across Wales, providing a very powerful visual connection with our past. Not only will our awards secure the immediate future of these particular buildings, it will also empower congregations to adapt them, where necessary, so they can be enjoyed more widely throughout the community and in turn enable them be more sustainable for the future."

Grants for Places of Worship announced today include:

St David's Church, Neath
A grant of £199,300 has been awarded to the Grade II* listed St David's Church in Neath. Built in 1866 and situated in the Neath Town Centre Conservation Area, the church features a clock and carillon of bells added later as memorial to the fallen of the First World War. The grant will enable urgent repairs to the church tower Chancel and Lady Chapel including re-roofing, timber repair, overhauling of the rainwater goods, tower louvres, the leadwork and finial ironwork. New capital works include the installation a new ladder to improve maintenance access to the tower. The grant will also enable the church to update its guides and website and fund a series of talks by the local Antiquarian Society on the conservation works as well as visits for conservation trainees.

St Barrwg's Church, Bedwas, Caerphilly
A grant of £180,300 has been awarded to the Grade II* listed St Barrwg's Church in Bedwas, situated in a prominent

position in Caerphilly. The vast majority of the building dates from the medieval period, including its tower. The church yard cross is a scheduled ancient monument. Whilst carrying out a previous HLF project to repair the Tower and Nave timbers, an infestation of death watch beetle was discovered. This grant will enable the eradication of the infestation, repair the roof structure and in addition install new facilities, including a toilet and kitchen, to enable the building to play an increased role in the life of the community.

For more information about applying for HLF's funding for places of worship visit our Grants for Places of Worship programme page.

Notes to editors

New Grants for Places of Worship scheme
Listed places of worship in the UK of all denominations and faiths are eligible for HLF grants which support urgent repairs to the fabric of the building with a focus on projects costing less than £250,000. There is a two-stage application process with development funding available at round one to help work up proposals.

Under the new programme, applications can now be submitted for new capital works but these costs should cost no more than around 15% of the total overall budget.

Funding for Places of Worship in Wales
As with the Repair Grants for Places of Worship programme, the new Grants for Places of Worship programme in Wales is funded solely by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Further information

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